

ACHR e-news

News from groups around Asia about what's happening in the region . . .

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights

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- News from three other ACHR Projects: Selavip, Community Finance Study, Poverty lines study.
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COMMUNITY ARCHITECTS NETWORK (CAN) UPDATE

The Community Architects Network Asia - CAN- began in 2010, initially to support ACHR's ACCA citywide upgrading projects. It has grown to expand its goals and activities and now embraces young architects in 25 countries. The Buckminster Fuller Institute has recognised the impacts of CAN by including it in the semi-finals (last 6 innovative finalists) of its BF International Award for the betterment of communities and cities. Representatives from CAN will fly to New York in November 2015 for the final awards presentation, accompanied in the audience by many potential donors or supporters of young architects throughout the world.

Message from Tee, one of CAN coordinators: " Hello all CAN friends around the globe. We would like to share the good news to you! Now the Community Architects Network (CAN) has been nominated in the finalist of 2015 Future Challenge Award from Buckminster Fuller Institute. It is the award for all of us together with people around Asia who worked so hard and never stop to look for solutions for better community better city. Please visit the below link to see others good projects at global scale. If possible please also share this news to your wonderful team, artisans, community builders, local government units, network of local universities who used to work with us. Lets make the road by walking together! With warm regards from CAN. [Read about the semi-finalists](#) from the Buckminster Fuller Institute website. [Visit the CAN Facebook page](#) for lots more information



"We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims. The challenge is to make the world work for 100% of humanity in the shortest possible time, with spontaneous cooperation and without ecological damage or disadvantage of anyone."

– R. Buckminster Fuller

The following blurb about CAN comes from the Buckminster Fuller Institute Website: The Community Architects Network (CAN) operates by their motto: "Let the people be the solution," seeking to empower people throughout Asia to become the designers of their own development. Founded in 2010, CAN is a network of architects, planners, builders, engineers, lecturers, and volunteers collectively building community-driven processes of participatory design, planning, and development in 19 countries, so far. CAN sustains and amplifies a paradigm shift toward participatory design and planning by bridging the divide between "experts" and local people. Over the years, CAN has systemically disseminated useful techniques for participatory design including surveying, mapping, financial planning, and construction management. CAN has evolved the capacity to legitimize local knowledge and drive community-led solutions in the face of heavily restrictive policy regulations, institutionalizing grassroots planning and achieving comprehensive change for communities at various scales.

"The cumulative architect is the one who sees people, who works with people, who sees their wisdom, who sees their solutions, and who builds his [or her] solutions on the people's solutions." Kirtee Shah, Senior Advisor of the Community Architects Network

Neoliberal financing, the excessive commodification of resources and services, and environmental over-exploitation are causing increasing vulnerability and inequality globally, particularly within booming urban populations. To address the issue at scale, informal settlements must be regarded not as causes, but as symptoms of deeper systemic imbalances, and the urban poor themselves can be the biggest resource for comprehensive social, economic, and environmental upgrading. By unlocking and channeling people's knowledge, creativity, and energy into a form of bottom-up politics based on partnerships and trust, both urban and rural

redevelopment can become a collective and inclusive process. Grounded in the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights' work in community-driven settlement upgrading, the Community Architects Network (CAN) pools the resources of technical assistance teams, coordinated savings groups, local authorities, and diverse stakeholders.

By facilitating comprehensive analysis of community needs, CAN leads the design of solutions to improve quality of life at multiple scales. CAN's beneficiaries are primarily communities, but CAN also sustains a network of continuous support for over 150 community architects engaged in the field and 450 students training with community architecture curricula. CAN aims to help community groups achieve self-management, so they can "sell" their own unique expertise to governments, NGOs, and international agencies working on sustainable development. With over 30 status legalizations achieved as a result of participatory mapping, planning, and design, over 500 volunteers to date, 7 handbooks produced, and 386 distinct communities impacted, CAN has made an impressive impact after only 5 years of operation. Their vision of unlocking and channeling people's knowledge, creativity, and energy at the grassroots to move toward a more inclusive, sustainable and livable society has the potential to become a model for disenfranchised urban populations everywhere.

ASIA PACIFIC URBAN FORUM (APUF) in JAKARTA in OCTOBER 2015

A good-sized team from ACHR will be taking part in the Sixth Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6), which is to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 15 – 21 October 2015. We will invite about 25 international participants from 10 countries to share stories about their community-driven processes at the ESCAP-organized event. In the days before and after APUF6, we will also invite our ACHR participants to visit communities and learn about the community processes in Indonesia.

The Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF) is a multi-stakeholder forum organized periodically every 4-5 years by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) with the aim to provide a regional platform for urban actors to: (i) discuss emerging and critical urban development issues; (ii) share experiences on good practices and approaches; and (iii) explore cooperation opportunities and links to regional and global processes and development objectives.

In 2011, ACHR and CODI were co-organizations together with UN-ESCAP for the fifth APUF under the theme of "Cities of opportunity: Partnerships for an inclusive and sustainable future" in Bangkok. The APUF-5 brought together some 1,000 participants including ministers, mayors and other government officials, representatives from academia, the private sector, civil society and grassroots leaders. It provided a platform for different urban partners and players to identify, discuss and prioritize emerging and critical issues in inclusive and sustainable urban development and share their experiences on effective and innovative practices.

This year, ACHR is going to join the APUF-6. It will take place on 19-21 October 2015 and will precede the High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting to Habitat III for Asia-Pacific to be convened by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on 22-23 October 2015. The meeting venue will be at the Jakarta Convention Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia. ACHR is applying to co-organize the 3 activities on the first 2 days (19 & 20): a parallel session on citywide upgrading, a plenary session on community architect network (CAN) in Asia; and an exhibition on ACCA and CAN's ground experiences and achievements developed in the last 5 years.

For the country participants, this time ACHR meeting will combined with the APUF-6 as the reason of budget limit. ACHR will sponsor for only 20 international participants to come to Indonesia, together with the support for local community network of 20-25 people (from 5-6 cities). Therefore, we need to select the countries and the participants, those who have been actively involved in the 3 on-going ACHR activities/projects and those who could contribute to the discussion of regional network in the APUF sessions, as well. *All participants may need to make an online registration on the official UN-ESCAP's website.*

NEWS FROM THREE OTHER ACHR PROJECTS

1. The ACHR-SELAVIP Housing project 2015 and 2016: The 8 participating country teams have received the first batch of budget. It is important to remind you that SELAVIP will transfer the second batch of budget (the remaining 50%) in separate tranches on an individual per project basis, further to the receipt of a satisfactory progress report on the relevant individual projects. So please send a full progress report to us as soonest so that we can help to send them to SELAVIP's coordinator. You can use the SELAVIP's template for the reporting contents but feel free to share the most lesson learnt as you like. In the upcoming ACHR meeting, each country will brief the progress report of on-going activities 2015: big housing project, small upgrading and decent poor housing.

- **The new proposal for the ACHR-SELAVIP Housing 2016:** in this meeting we will discuss and make decision to support the new proposals in 2016. All countries those who are interested to join this new programme need to prepare and submit a full proposal. In which, please show the detailed information: what community needs and activities; how finance will be used and what is the impact to meet broader objectives and developing the ACCA's momentum of citywide and community-driven.
- **Presentations:** In the meeting, each country will present its work and key points of new proposals and following Q&A made by all participants. After that we will make approvals all together as we did the last ACHR meeting for the 1st round fund. So it is important to start right now working with your community and city network to prepare carefully the new proposals.

- **The deadline for submitting the new proposal is September 15, 2015.** ACHR Secretariat will need time to make a synthesis of all proposals and get possible feedback before the meeting.
- 2. Community Finance Study:** Community networks from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand will share the first draft of information collected from their experiences and lessons implementing the community-driven finance in Asia, as part of the ACHR's study on community finance funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.
- 3. Poverty Line Study:** In 2014 ACHR produced a ground-breaking poverty study which was perhaps the first to be conducted by the poor themselves, who are the real "experts," and whose understanding of poverty comes from actually living it and from their work finding lasting solutions to it. The results were published in an ACHR Newsletter downloadable [HERE](#). A second more expansive phase is on-going in 5 countries in Asia. This meeting will review the phase1 figures of poverty lines of each community network and plan to open dialogue with local governments and relevant research agencies. The 5 country teams will share the working process and/or the study results at this ACHR meeting.

ACHR SAYS GOODBYE TO RASHID KHATRI

It is with much sadness that we send out the news that Rashid Khatri passed away on the 15th of September, 2015, in the Cambodian city of Battambang, where he had been living for some time. Khatri was only 51 years old and died of heart complications.

From Somsook: This is really very sad news to learn that Khatri has passed away so unexpectedly. He was a person who always found ways to help poor people and to use his technical expertise to find solutions, justice and peace for those in our society who are poor and unprivileged. After working for many years with the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi, he came far away from Pakistan to work with urban poor communities in Cambodia, where he spent many years of his life. Now he will rest in eternal peace. Our condolences to his family, to all his friends and to the people with whom he worked.

